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DR. BATES' SERMON,

PREACHED AT THE

*Sixteenth Annual Meeting*

OF THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

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INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH.

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A

SERMON,

PREACHED IN NORTHAMPTON, MASS. SEPT. 21, 1825,

AT THE

Sixteenth Annual Meeting

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## SERMON.

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JOHN viii, 32.

"THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."

MAN, viewed as a being susceptible of happiness and capable of responsible action, sustains a thousand relations, involving as many duties. Whatever, therefore, tends to increase this susceptibility and enlarge this capacity, must exalt his nature, and promote the benevolent purpose, for which he was created. Such is the tendency of well-directed education, of virtuous example, of sound philosophy; indeed, of every thing, which gives the understanding a controlling influence over the passions, without taking from them the power of excitement and the energy of action; of every thing which purifies and regulates the feelings, without diminishing their ardor, or depriving them of their appropriate objects. But of all the causes which conspire to produce this effect, none is so uniform, extensive, and efficient, as Christian truth. Indeed, without the concurrence of this cause, all others are feeble in their operations, and exceedingly uncertain in their results. The most refined education, from which Christian instruction is excluded, may be spoiled by a few licentious maxims, or a single vicious habit; may even increase the

wretchedness and extend the pernicious influence of those, whose minds are thus enlarged, without being sanctified. So likewise the salutary restraints of the most wholesome example, where there is no settled principle to sanction and support its authority, may be broken by a mere change of situation, or a simple introduction to new associates. And even philosophy, founded on experience and observation, needs the light of Christian faith, and the motives drawn from that futurity which the Gospel unfolds, to give importance to her maxims, and secure obedience to her precepts. Nothing, indeed, has been found to supply the place, or supersede the necessity, of "the wisdom from above;" whose light never fails to guide its followers in the paths of peace and safety.

That Christianity, believed and regarded, has a tendency to exalt the character and increase the happiness of mankind, is a doctrine clearly implied in our text. "Then said Jesus to those Jews, which believed on him, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and *the truth shall make you free.*" Without repeating the whole context, or giving a disquisition on the metaphorical language, which runs through it, I shall be justified in calling your attention, at once, to the doctrine already stated; and leading you to consider, at large, *the influence of Christianity on the character and happiness of mankind.*

The subject, thus proposed, will be found appropriate to the occasion; full of instruction and consolation for those, who are offering their prayers, devoting their substance, employing their time, and exerting their energies, to communicate the knowledge of this benign religion to their fellow-men—to

the heathen, who are afar off—to all the inhabitants of the earth. Let it not be forgotten, however, that the influence of Christianity, to which your attention will be directed, is the influence, which grows out of a firm belief of its doctrines, and a consequent regard to its precepts. The promise of Christ, in our text, is to those, *who believe on him and continue in his word*. In proportion, therefore, to the conformity of our faith to the pure doctrines of the Gospel, and the fidelity of our obedience to its holy precepts, will be the extent of its influence on our character and happiness. Christianity, in some of its forms, may be so modified, as to lose its beneficent character and sanctifying tendency. And even where its principal truths are admitted in speculation, its genuine spirit may be so completely disregarded, as to pervert its whole design, and render it “a savor of death unto death.” But in its purity and simplicity, firmly believed and duly regarded, it always exerts a salutary influence, reaching all minds, adapted to all capacities, bringing “peace and good-will to all men.”

1. Let us consider the influence of Christianity on the character and happiness of man, viewed simply as an *intellectual being*. If we can prove, that Christianity encourages a spirit of free inquiry and philosophical investigation, that it tends to enlarge the sphere of human knowledge and promote intellectual improvement, the inference will follow, that it elevates the character and adds to the happiness of mankind. This must be admitted; or stupidity is a blessing, and unrestrained indulgence of passion a duty. I know, much has been said in praise of ignorance; and even genius, with all her inventions and acquisitions, has been charged with the crime of entailing mischief



and misery on the world. But experience satisfactorily confutes the presumptuous charge. The happiness of ignorance and stupidity is only negative; it is the appropriate happiness of the brute, not of man; not of beings endowed with intellectual foresight and capable of anticipation. That knowledge is power, has long ago been admitted as an axiom; and we may add, with a confidence little short of intuitive certainty, that the result of knowledge, well directed and suitably applied, is happiness. Although this, like every other blessing bestowed on man, is liable to abuse and subject to perversion; although unrestrained speculation may bewilder and confound, and knowledge misapplied, lead to practical error; although the cultivation of one faculty of the mind, to the neglect of another, may distort and derange the whole intellectual system; although a man may thus be rendered less happy and less useful by his very attainments; yet a well-cultivated and a well-balanced mind, other circumstances being equal, will enjoy and communicate happiness in proportion to its enlargement and acquisitions. Whatever, therefore, tends to promote intellectual improvement and advance the cause of science, must elevate the character and increase the felicity of man; must give to the individuals, who are brought under its influence, increased susceptibility of enjoyment, and additional power of rendering others happy. Now such, we contend, is the natural tendency of Christianity. Its very spirit is liberty; not only liberty of action, but liberty of thought, liberty of inquiry. It challenges investigation. It awakens curiosity. It dignifies truth. The Gospel directly increases the stock of human knowledge, by teaching what unassisted reason could



never discover, and giving certainty to truths, which philosophy could only conjecture. It furnishes, too, the strongest motives to investigation and intellectual improvement. Bringing "life and immortality to light," it gives dignity to man and importance to the acquisition of knowledge. Without regard to this doctrine, we could feel but little interest in the future, and have but little inducement to draw instruction from the past. In the view of men, about to perish with the beasts—born yesterday, to die tomorrow—without hope beyond the grave, intelligence would appear of little value—knowledge not worth the labor of acquisition. But in the view of beings, living for eternity, every thing pertaining not only to moral character, but intellectual culture, assumes an importance and exhibits a grandeur, which infinity alone can impart.

For farther proof and illustration of our position, let an appeal be made to facts. Where has science prevailed? By whom has literature been refined? In what ages and countries has philosophy, sound, salutary philosophy, been most successfully cultivated? A reference to history, and a view of the civilized world, will furnish an answer to these inquiries, at once proving and illustrating our doctrine.—It is true, the discussion of this topic must necessarily be attended with some difficulty; and our conclusions may not be sufficiently definite, to afford universal satisfaction. For we cannot trace every improvement to its true cause. We are, indeed, obliged to admit that on some important subjects, unassisted reason has made high attainments; that (unless we contend with some, that reason in every age and in all countries has received more or less assistance from tradi-

tional revelation) her speculations have often led to valuable results. Philosophy has certainly accomplished much for the benefit of the human race, where the *direct* influence of revelation had never been felt. Greece and Rome could boast of their great men; men of fine intellects and high attainments. So, too, in modern times and Christian countries, men, who have at least *pretended* to reject the light of revelation, have cultivated their intellectual powers to a high degree, pursued their philosophical inquiries with great success, and produced works of real taste and genius. In addition to all this it cannot be denied, that superstition and bigotry, under the mask and bearing the name of Christianity, have sometimes shackled the human mind, and greatly retarded the progress of knowledge in the world. But while we admit these facts, which certainly create some difficulty in the investigation, and throw some obscurity on the subject, we still think, that our position may be maintained, with no small degree of certainty and precision.

Christianity, by exhibiting man in his true character, and pointing him to his ultimate destiny, happily directs the human mind to those inquiries, which are most intimately connected with his true interest. It naturally restrains from those speculations, which end in conjecture, and afford no practical or consoling results; while it furnishes new motives, and urges to increased diligence, in the investigation of truth, especially of that truth which is connected with duty and happiness. With this statement the history of philosophy perfectly agrees. The fine spirits of antiquity spent their strength in forming hypotheses, in investigating subjects of no practical utility, or in



searching after truths, which are altogether beyond the reach of finite minds. Hence their researches frequently involved them in new errors, and often left them overwhelmed in the turbid waters of skepticism. Their best metaphysical systems served rather to bewilder, than to guide the inquirer after truth; they conducted him into a labyrinth, without a clue to direct his wandering steps. It was left for Christian philosophy—for minds enlightened, purified, and directed by revelation, to fix the bounds, and prescribe the laws, of philosophical investigation. Till Bacon, no more gifted by nature than Aristotle, yet guided by this heavenly light, and feeling a responsibility for his doctrines, which the father of ancient philosophy never felt; till this Christian philosopher had drawn the line between hypothesis and fact, established the authority of inductive reasoning, and thus limited and defined the field of philosophical research, more than half the speculations of the strongest minds were fraught with absurdity and productive of practical error. And wherever modern philosophy has rejected the light of revelation, burst the restraints of sober investigation, and discarded that spirit of meekness and sobriety, which Christ displayed, and which Christianity inculcates, she has served rather to obscure and bewilder, than to enlighten and guide the human mind. Look at the operations of the philosophical infidelity of the last century. As far as her power extended, she swept away the mounds of civil society, threw down the barriers which had been erected against vice and error, and destroyed whatever was calculated to guard the best interests and highest happiness of mankind.



But the influence of Christianity on intellectual man is not confined to the regions appropriated to technical philosophy. It elevates the minds, not of a few only, but of many—of men of all classes and in every condition. Destroying the proud distinctions of rank and cast, Christianity operates on the great mass of mind, diffusing knowledge through the whole. It gives importance and elevation to the weakest intellect. Ancient philosophy was confined to the schools. It was shrouded in mystery. A few only were permitted to look within the veil; and from the inspection of the female sex, it was entirely secluded. But modern philosophy, adorned with Christian humility, walks abroad in the clear light of heaven, that all may contemplate her beauties, and catch a portion of her effulgent spirit. The doors even of her inner temple have been thrown open, that persons of all ranks and both sexes may enter, without restraint, and learn her laws, and receive her counsels.

After all, the influence of Christianity on intellect is principally discoverable through the medium of its moral influence. By this influence it regulates the process of intellectual cultivation, and produces among the intellectual powers a just balance, a happy equilibrium. Infidel genius runs wild; destroying itself, and often bringing sudden destruction on those, who attempt to pursue its track. But genius, guided by Christianity, is sober, yet persevering in her course; conducting all, who follow her steps, by a safe path, into regions of light and felicity. Vice contaminates mind, and obscures intellectual vision; the understanding is darkened through the depravity of the heart. But virtue, Christian virtue, governing the

passions, restraining the appetites, directing the propensities, strengthens and elevates the intellectual powers, facilitates acquisition, gives stability to science and utility to knowledge. Genius without principle forms such a character as Byron's, irritable, eccentric, wretched; and produces such works as his, which, like transient meteors, dazzle and delude for a moment, and then sink into forgetfulness for ever. But talents, sanctified by divine grace and moved by Christian motives, constitutes a mind like Newton's, consistent, splendid, happy; and leads to such investigations, as he made, which, like the orbs of heaven, whose tracks he followed and whose laws he revealed, will continue to enlighten and guide all future generations.

II. Let us consider the influence of Christianity on the character and happiness of man, viewed more particularly as a *moral being*. We have been led unavoidably to anticipate something of this view. We have already said, that man is capable of sustaining and feeling moral relations; and we have seen, that a regard to these relations and the duties which flow from them, is intimately connected with intellectual greatness and the acquisition of useful knowledge. But we now proceed to consider the more direct effects of the Gospel on the moral dignity of man, and the blessedness with which this dignity is inseparably connected.

The discussion of this topic we commence with the broad position, that in proportion as a man feels and regards his moral relations, other circumstances being equal, will be his power of enjoying and communicating happiness.—It is true, human nature, even in its fallen condition, is capable of pleasing emotions



and salutary propensities. Natural affection, instinctive compassion, and social sympathy enable us to participate in the joys and sorrows of our friends and fellow-men; and dispose us not only to “shed a tear for others’ wo,” but to extend a hand for their relief. Yet, however salutary the influence of these natural feelings, and however clearly they indicate the wisdom and benevolence of our Creator, still they do not much distinguish man from the beasts that perish; nor can they be relied on, as a source of permanent felicity or benevolent action, unless sanctified by divine grace, and directed by enlightened and holy principle. Natural affection, without modification, is nothing but extended self-love, exclusive in its nature, and often destructive of every benevolent feeling and generous purpose. Instinctive compassion is blind, and, left to its own guidance, it will do evil as well as good—will be generous, even where generosity is pernicious—will gratify, where gratification encourages vice—will grant relief, where relief is death; it not unfrequently spares the life of the murderer, puts a dagger into the hand of the assassin, and sets at liberty the enemies of peace and social happiness. And even sympathy, that great spring of benevolent action, that mighty cord, which binds man to man, that indescribable power, by which we may draw felicity from all around, and communicate happiness, as far as our hand can reach, or our voice be heard; even this principle of our natural constitution, so essential to personal enjoyment and benevolent effort, is still dependent, for its ultimate effects and continued existence, on a happy cultivation and judicious direction—on a union with moral and religious principle. How often does native sympathy, in the irreligious



and immoral, degenerate into a sickly, peevish, inefficient sensibility, or give place to stupid apathy, or cruel ferocity! Thus unsanctified, it can weep over fictitious distress and imaginary sufferings; while with instinctive disgust it turns away its un pitying eye from scenes of real poverty and wretchedness. It can spend its strength and exhaust its energies, over a novel or at a theatre, weeping with the unfortunate hero of fiction, or repining with the elegant, but disappointed person of the drama; while the real sufferer, who has fallen among thieves, is sullenly passed by, and left to welter in his blood—while the sufferings, which need relief and call for active charity, are forgotten or neglected. Exclude from the human mind a belief of that “life and immortality,” which are “brought to light in the Gospel,” and all the endearing charities of the present life would flee with it. Little would be left, to excite our sympathy, and nothing to awaken the energies of enlarged benevolence. Men would view each other, and treat each other, as fellow-worms, and feel as little moved at the sight of murder, as when an insect dies. Assassination in their view (to use the language and express the feelings of the skeptical Hume,) would be “nothing more than changing the current of a little red fluid.” Contracted selfishness, cold misanthropy, and cruel ferocity would exclude from the human breast every feeling, which now gives us an interest in each other’s happiness; would destroy every motive, which now excites to benevolent action, and gives to man all that is kind and lovely in his moral character. This is not conjecture, but fact. Where the light of revelation has never shed its benign rays, savage cruelty has held undivided empire, and exer-

cised its ferocious authority without restraint; bursting asunder the ties of natural affection, plunging tender infancy in the stream of death, dragging mourning widowhood to the funeral pile, and leaving the decrepitude of age to perish with hunger and nakedness. And where infidelity has so far prevailed in Christian countries, as to obtain a controlling influence over public sentiment and public feeling, its demoralizing and degrading tendency has been seen, and its cruel effects deeply felt. Look at the scenes of the French Revolution—a Revolution, commenced on infidel principles, and conducted by infidel counsels, proclaiming, as it advanced, “death is an eternal sleep;”—Look, and behold the horrid deeds, which such a sentiment could perpetrate, the ferocious spirit, which it could breathe even into the bosom of civilization!

The fact, that the writings of some of the ancient philosophers furnish many good moral lessons, is cheerfully admitted. But it is a fact, not at all inconsistent with our doctrine. For not a few of those relations, on which the duties of life depend, are exceedingly obvious, if not subject to rigid demonstration. Such men as Cicero and Seneca, therefore, could clearly prove, that virtue is honorable, lovely, desirable, and safe; but they could never furnish a sufficient sanction, to ensure obedience to their moral precepts. The motives, drawn from their cold speculations and prudential considerations, were too feeble to resist the strong current of human depravity. Even the philosophers themselves were often overcome by the slightest temptations; and it is at least questionable, whether, in the long catalogue of those, whose eulogized names have come down to us, there can



be found a single example of meekness, forbearance, and disinterested benevolence. I know it is fashionable with those who oppose Christian missions, to praise the virtues both of ancient and modern heathens. But, I ask, what was the character of these virtues? Was there, in them, any thing like self-denial, humility, disinterestedness, and purity of heart? Pride, ambition, and love of praise seem to have been the basis of the best characters, which heathenism, in its most refined state, ever formed. Even patriotism, the most imposing virtue of Greece and Rome, when analyzed, will be found to consist more of selfishness than benevolence; to include more of hatred, than love; to exhibit more of enmity to the inhabitants of other countries, than simple concern for the welfare of their own countrymen. I ask again, where are the evidences of their charity? Where are the traces of their eleemosynary provisions and benevolent institutions? These are exclusively the fruits of Christianity. They exist in Christian countries alone. Paganism never founded a hospital, nor opened an alms-house, nor formed a benevolent association, nor undertook an enterprize to meliorate the condition of mankind.

It may be difficult, by a rigid course of induction, to show the precise influence of Christianity on the state of public morals; because it is impossible to point out the precise degree, to which this influence, in any particular age or country, has prevailed. The light of revelation has often been reflected, at least in scattered rays, on distant heathen lands, and there exerted a portion of its life-giving power; and, on the other hand, where its rays have fallen most directly and most copiously, it has sometimes been obscured



by depravity, or obstructed by human inventions and political contrivances. Still an appeal may be safely made to general facts. Look then at Christian countries, where Christianity has existed in its simplest forms, and at individuals living under its purest and highest influence; and compare their morals with those of heathen lands, ancient or modern, savage or civilized. I point you not to those portions of Christendom, that are oppressed by an intolerant ecclesiastical establishment. For such establishments are evidently opposed to the spirit, and inconsistent with the very genius, of the Gospel. Indeed every attempt to prescribe religious forms by civil law, or enforce the observance of religious rites by civil authority, is an encroachment on the prerogatives of heaven, an abridgment of Christian liberty, and a restraint upon the salutary influence of Christian truth.—I point you not to infidels, even in a free Christian country: For, while they are under some restraint from the indirect influence of Christian example and the force of public opinion, which keeps them back from the grosser crimes of heathenism, their hearts are hardened, their guilt aggravated, their whole characters debased and their wretchedness increased by the abuse of their privileges, by their obstinate rejection of the light, which has come into the world.—I point you not to hypocrites, formalists, and time-servers, who assume the Christian name, and put on the badges of Christianity, for political purposes: For their very profession is an immorality of the grossest character; and the forms and ceremonies, which they hypocritically observe, continually harden their hearts, and ultimately prepare them for the perpetration of the most horrid deeds, and the endurance of the most aggra-

vated condemnation. I point you not to those men, who, while they admit the truth of Christianity in the gross, reject its peculiar doctrines in detail; who, while they receive its sacred books, as a revelation from heaven, continually appeal from its decisions, contend for the paramount authority of human reason, and incline to the dictates of their own darkened understandings—who have explained away its mysteries, frittered down its doctrines, curtailed its precepts, and limited its authority, till it differs little from the milder forms of infidelity: For such a system of religion (if enough of positive sentiment remains to constitute a system) cannot much affect the character or happiness of its votaries; it must leave them very much as it found them; it possesses no transforming power; it opens no sure source of consolation; it is a cold, comfortless, inefficient system; and wherever it prevails, it must paralyze the moral energies of society and depress the standard of public morals. I point you not to any of these examples, for a comparison with heathen morality: For none of them furnishes a fair specimen of the influence of Christian truth. They might, perhaps, prove, that Christianity, however distorted and corrupted, is to be preferred to paganism, in its mildest character. They do, indeed, establish the truth, and show the importance of our preliminary observation, that to produce its genuine effects, Christianity must be firmly believed and faithfully regarded in practice; that, before men can be made free from moral pollution by Christian truth, they must believe in Christ, and continue in his word. But I point you, with confidence in the result, to those Christian countries, where no arbitrary restraints are imposed on free inquiry; and to those individuals, who receive the Bible as the word of God,

yield a willing submission to its authority, and abide by its decisions, without gainsaying; who have imbibed the spirit of the Gospel and received its peculiar truths in love; who, in the very language of inspiration, have been “born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God;” and are, therefore, sincere, experimental, practical Christians. Let the appeal be made here; and let facts decide the question, if in the minds of any it remains a question, what is the moral tendency of Christianity.

III. Let us consider the influence of Christianity on the character and happiness of man, viewed as a *member of civil society* and a *subject of civil government*. This view may not at once appear sufficiently distinct from the preceding, to constitute a new topic of discourse. It is true, all the duties of a citizen, in an enlarged sense, are *moral* duties; and yet it should not be forgotten, that the relations on which they depend, are relations not of individual to individual, but of individuals to the community—relations, growing out of organized society and civil institutions.

The social nature of man evinces, that he was designed for society; and the necessity of civil regulations to social order, and their subserviency to social happiness, prove, as the Scriptures also teach, that civil government is an ordinance of God.—Now the best forms of government are those, which most effectually secure the safety and prosperity of the whole community, with the least restraint upon personal liberty; and Christianity is happily calculated to diminish the necessity of this restraint, and guard against the dangers and abuses of freedom. By requiring obedience, and inducing obedience to civil authority, “not only for wrath but for conscience



sake," it diminishes the number of crimes, softens the rigor of primitive justice, and renders a high degree of personal freedom consistent with general peace and safety. Christianity, therefore, exalts the character and promotes the happiness of mankind, by giving, at once, the blessings of social order and civil liberty. Standing on the history of the world, I can establish this position. Nothing like civil liberty, united with social order and security, now exists in any country beyond the limits of Christian influence. And within these limits, the degree of settled liberty, enjoyed in any Christian country, may be pretty accurately measured by the purity and extent of this influence. The ancient republics could not long exist, even in name, for the want of virtue and intelligence in the people. And all attempts, in modern time, to establish free civil institutions, where Christianity did not exist, or where it existed in a corrupt state, have utterly failed; and they will for ever fail in any country, till the influential members of the community are made free by the enlightening and purifying influence of Christian truth. The States of South America may secure their independence from European bondage; but genuine freedom and equal rights they cannot enjoy, nor will they long preserve even the forms of civil liberty; unless, as recent events lead us to hope, the papal yoke be broken from their necks; and the clouds of ignorance, bigotry and vice, which hang over them, be dissipated by the piercing rays of the sun of righteousness. If, therefore, you wish mankind to be free and happy, send them the Bible, preach to them the Gospel of Christ, give them Christianity in its purity and simplicity.

It is greatly to be lamented, that Christian maxims have had so little direct influence on the counsels even

of Christian nations. But, small as this influence has been, compared with what it should have been, and with what, we hope, it soon will be, it has not been without its beneficial effects. It has gradually modified and improved the law of nations, teaching them to admit in theory, and begin to feel in practice, that they are moral persons, bound, by moral obligation, to observe in their intercourse with each other, the great Christian law of love. Especially, has it improved that portion of international law, which relates to war; softening its rigors, mitigating its horrors, and thus preparing the way for that mighty and glorious change, which it is destined to effect, "when nation shall no more rise up against nation, nor kingdom against kingdom—when men shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, and shall learn war no more."

It is altogether unnecessary, and the time already occupied by this discourse forbids, that I should attempt a further illustration of the subject, by taking another distinct view of man, as a dying, yet immortal being—as placed here, in a state of probation—as living in time, but forming a character for eternity. For although this is the most important, and most interesting view, which could be taken of him; yet it is so familiar to the mind of every Christian, that I need not detain you, a moment, on this topic. Let it be simply remembered, that "without holiness no one can see the Lord," that "except a man be born again he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven;" and let it not be forgotten how insufficient to produce this renovation, with the exception of Christianity, is every system of religion, which the world has known;—let the express testimony of inspiration on this subject be called to mind, that all, who are redeemed

from iniquity, are redeemed by the blood of Christ—that all, who are saved, are saved by grace through faith—that all, who are born again, are born of the Spirit by the word of God—that all, who are sanctified unto eternal life, are sanctified through the truth, applied by the Holy Ghost;—let this recollection be had; and the importance, the momentous, the indispensable importance of Christianity, in forming the permanent character and securing the highest happiness of mankind, will be at once perceived and felt. To the true believer, how great are the consolations of the Gospel, in seasons of trial and affliction; and especially in the hour of death! It has taught him, in whatsoever state he is, therewith to be content. He knows in whom he has believed; and he is assured, that all things shall work together for his good. He can pass through the dark valley of the shadow of death without fear of evil. In view of his approaching dissolution he can say; “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me, at that day; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing.”—But without the enlightening and comforting influence of Christian faith and hope, “shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon” the grave. Without the support of this hope, men must remain “all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death.” Without the light of this faith they must behold the approaches of this great and last enemy, under the agonizing horrors of despair. How appropriate to the dying sceptic, if capable of reflection, is the language of the poet:



"Ay, but to die, and go we know not where,  
 To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot;  
 This sensible warm motion to become  
 A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit  
 To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside  
 In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;  
 To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,  
 And blown with restless violence round about  
 The pendent world; or to be worse than worst  
 Of those, that lawless and uncertain thoughts  
 Imagine howling; 'tis too horrible!  
 The weariest and most loathed worldly life,  
 That age, ache, penury, imprisonment  
 Can lay on nature, is a paradise  
 To what we fear of death!"

IN making an application of the subject of this discourse, I have little to say: For the lessons of gratitude, and consolation, and duty, which it suggests, are exceedingly obvious; and they must already have been presented to every reflecting mind, and impressed on every pious and benevolent heart.

How obvious, my Christian brèthren, is the inference, that we are under peculiar obligations of gratitude, to our God and Redeemer, for our distinguished Christian privileges! We live in Immanuel's land. To us Christianity has come, in all her simplicity and splendor—in all her beauty and glory. We have the Bible in our hands; and may learn its truths, and obey its injunctions without fear or restraint. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

Again, how obvious is the lesson of consolation and joy, which flows from our subject, in connexion with the prophetic assurance of the future triumphs of the Gospel! If Christianity, in its limited operations, has done so much to meliorate the condition of mankind; what must be its effects, when its influence shall have become universal and unrestrained; reach-

ing all lands, purifying all hearts, and controlling the counsels of all nations;—when “at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess him to be Lord, to the glory of God, the Father;”—when “the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High!”

Finally; how obvious is the inference from our doctrine, that it is the duty of every Christian to aid the cause of Christian Missions. The wretched state of the Heathen, of Jews, of Mahomedans, and even of multitudes, nominally Christians, must awaken the tenderest sympathies excite the most ardent and importunate prayers, and rouse all the energies of the renewed soul. My brethren, we have placed before us the strongest motives to induce us vigorously to engage in this work of love. The sublimity of the enterprise, the certainty of ultimate success, the signs of the times, and, what is paramount to all other considerations, the command, the last command of our blessed Redeemer, urge us to active exertion and persevering effort, in this cause. Do any object? Will any withhold their hand or restrain their prayers? They are not Christians—certainly not active and well informed Christians. All the objections, which I have heard alleged against the missionary enterprises of the day, are objections, either of ignorance, or infidelity, or avarice. It will invariably be found, that men opposed to the benevolent operations for the spread of the Gospel, are either ignorant of the nature and design of these operations, or they have no established belief in the truth and efficacy of Christianity, or they possess a sordid spirit, which hardens their hearts against the convictions of their understandings, or they are excited by the combined influence of all

these causes, to fight against God. Those, who truly believe and love the Gospel, who know how to estimate the value of the Gospel, and who feel any thing of the benevolent spirit of the Gospel, will not, cannot object to Christian Missions; will not, cannot hold back their hands from the benevolent work. It is true, "salvation is of the Lord;" but it is equally true, that he works by means; and has designated the means, by which sinners are to be converted, sanctified and saved. "After that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." The knowledge of the Lord must be communicated through the medium of his word. This word, therefore, must be translated into every language, published in every land, and preached to every rational creature under heaven.

Be entreated, then, my Christian friends, my brethren and sisters in the Lord, to put your hands to this glorious work; and set an example, which your fellow Christians, every where, may safely follow. Like your elder brother, while you lean on Jesus' bosom, imbibe his heavenly spirit;—like John, the beloved disciple, show that you are yourselves constrained by love, to speak the language, and perform the labors of love.—Like your elder sister, do what you can for Christ and his cause;—Like Mary, anoint the feet of your blessed Redeemer; and though some Judas should reproach you for your zeal, and charge you with the folly of wasting your substance; yet be not ye discouraged by the reproach, nor terrified at the charge. It is the reproach of the cross—it is the charge of a traitor. Wherefore break the box, and pour the precious ointment on the Saviour's feet.





